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3 November 1958

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Review of Soviet Publications

1. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to examine and review the four statistical volumes, published by the Scientific-Technical Marketing Institute of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Trade, which you received from

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2. Although it is my understanding that you may have already received informal comments from one of our analysts on two of the volumes (b. & d. below) through Mr. Herbert Block, DSS/IRA, Department of State, I have requested that our appropriate branches make a critical examination of the four volumes. Summaries of the comments are quoted herewith:

a. Economic Position of the Capitalist Countries in 1956:

Structurally the book is divided into chapters dealing with economic sectors with emphasis on industrial production, agriculture, and foreign trade. Each chapter is subdivided into discussions by country, focused on the US, Western Europe, Canada, and Japan. Most of the volume is a reasonably objective presentation of facts gleaned from UN publications and official national periodicals. The summary and introductory sections are propagandistic in aim and present the usual dogma concerning the malfunctioning of capitalist economic systems. The principal propaganda theses are inflation, disproportions in capitalist economies, internal and external competition for markets, and interpretation of capital investment as an effort to decrease costs and increase profits. No attempt is made to draw East-West comparisons.

b. Soviet Foreign Trade with Socialist Countries:

Contains some hitherto unpublished Soviet data on its trade with Bloc countries in 1950, including trade balances. Both the preface and the country chapters, while offering no new clues to Soviet economic policy in the Bloc, contain detailed information on Soviet commodity trade.

c. Soviet Foreign Trade with the Countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (1958):

Yields no new information regarding Soviet policies or motivations in the underdeveloped countries, although in the preface a brief summary of Soviet economic relations with these areas places the current trade offensive in historical perspective. The country chapters for such areas as Afghanistan, which does not regularly publish its trade statistics, provide interesting details on Soviet trade balances and on the commodity composition of Soviet trade with these areas.

d. Soviet Foreign Trade with Capitalist Countries (1957):

Appears to be of little or no intelligence value. In the 14-page preface, Soviet trade with these countries is discussed in the usual Soviet terms, and the country chapters disclose no significant trade data which are not already known from other sources.

3. It would appear that, at least, volumes b. and c. contain information of interest to our people, and I appreciate your letting us have a look at them.

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